

MEDIA RELEASE

SBA SOUTH CAROLINA DISTRICT OFFICE

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Contact: Anna Huntley, 803-253-3753
anna.huntley@sba.gov

Spartanburg Native and Owner of Carbon Fiber Car Hood Distributor Is 2008 SBA Young Entrepreneur of the Year for South Carolina

SPARTANBURG, S.C. – Christopher Osborne, 23, is the 2008 U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Young Entrepreneur of the Year. Osborne is owner and CEO of Illstreet.com, the largest distributor of carbon fiber car hoods in the United States. He was nominated by Jill Burroughs, Director of the Clemson Regional Small Business Development Center, and Elaine Smith, owner of Benchmark Outsourcing Group.

“Ever since I can remember, I’ve been trying to sell, trade or buy things,” Osborne wrote in a paper for a class at Clemson University. After receiving his own computer in sixth grade, he developed his first successful Web site. By high school, he had combined his business acumen and love of computer code and – driven by his desire for expensive new car tires – started designing Web sites for businesses on a referral basis.

In 2000, while he was still in high school, Osborne started a non-profit regional Web forum for the advancement of motor sports. In January 2004, as a freshman at Clemson University, he transformed the forum into Illstreet.com, a small Web-based company selling carbon fiber car hoods – a \$39 million industry – and Wing West body part kits. This past summer, Illstreet caught the attention of USA Today, which consulted Osborne for an article on the rising cost of carbon fiber; his comments ran in USA Today on June 6, 2007.

Illstreet continues to not only thrive, but also grow. Harkening back to Osborne’s early entrepreneurial roots, Illstreet recently acquired a Web consulting company to engage a new customer market. Through Illstreet’s new consulting sector, Osborne assists small businesses with Web site design and hosting services.

Osborne graduated with honors from Clemson in December 2007.

Christopher Osborne will be honored at the SBA South Carolina District Office’s small business awards ceremony, part of the Salute to Small Business on Tuesday, April 1, at the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center.

All SBA programs and services are provided on a non-discriminatory basis.

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